

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

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REPLY TO: 5230 Forest Insect Evaluation

May 21, 1973

SUBJECT: Laguna Mountain Insect Control Project

TO: Forest Supervisor, Cleveland N.F.



On May 11, 1973, Ken Swain and Bob Gustafson re-evaluated the Laguna Mountain Bark Beetle Infestation. They were accompanied by Bard Beutler, Resources Officer, Descanso District and John Gray, California Division of Forestry, District VI Office, Riverside.

In the Laguna Mountain Biological Evaluation of March 27, 1973 it was pointed out that the timber stand (Jeffrey pine) is rapidly deteriorating in health and vigor. This observation was strengthened as a result of this current evaluation. The past three years of drought conditions have weakened individual trees to the point that secondary insects and pathogens, not normally considered to be tree killers, are now killing trees. Approximately 30 to 40 standing (apparently infested) and treated Jeffrey pine were examined. These trees were distributed from Wooded Hill to Laguna Campground. Most of the trees examined were not currently infested with ips or California flatheaded borer. Ips had already emerged from the tops and limbs and the California flatheaded borer was found only occasionally in the main bole or limbs.

Certainly, the California flatheaded borer is continuing to cause tree mortality, as the nine sample trees examined in the March evaluation were heavily infested; however, as a result of the current evaluation, it is apparent that many trees are dying primarily from environmental stresses. This conclusion was reached because a substantial number of the treated trees examined had neither ips or primary flatheads.

The past drought condition has put severe moisture stress on these trees. In addition, the following pathogens were found in various degrees of severity: dwarf mistletoe, annosus root disease, and elytroderma. These pathogens solely or in combination with each other, and in conjunction with ips and the California flatheaded borer, are responsible for most of the tree mortality in the Laguna Mountains. The insects are executing the coup de grace, but many of these trees would die anyway.

The District asked about the feasibility of requiring the logging contractor to spray the slash and cull material. It is felt that, at this point in time, very little would be gained by spraying this material. However, if any insect control is to be accomplished by logging, the logs must be removed by no later than July 15, and preferably earlier.

The District is also concerned about ips building up in pine slash created by the fuel modification project. We share this concern; however, previous research has shown that normal or above-normal spring moisture has an

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adverse effect on ips buildup, and the Lagunas had good spring moisture. Consequently, it is hoped that ips do not become a problem. If ips do begin building up in slash, and you feel that it may become a problem, request a biological evaluation from the Regional Office. Do not arbitrarily spray green, uninfested slash with lindane to prevent ips attack as lindane is not registered for that particular use.

H. F. Kasic

for
NORMAN E. GOULD
Chief, Division of Timber Management

cc: Cleveland